THE PLAYBOY

Two Absorbing Games and a Worth-while Girl.

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Illustrated by C. D. BATCHELOR.

ACROSS the slab of mahogany Eddie Penfold saw himself reflected in the face of his brother Jim. The fifteen years which separated them seemed suddenly to be insignificant. Jim, pink and soft and contented, stood for a moment as a future portrait of Eddie.

"As the direct result of the present selling agreement, therefore, the speculative element of our manufacturing problem has been practically eliminated. Aside from the saving of all selling expense, the cost of actual manufacture has thus been reduced by twelve and seven-tenths per cent."

McVey seemed to relish the words, to release them with a sort of affectionate reluctance. Eddie listened absently. He glanced at the watch on his wrist. Barely two—and the train left at three-thirty.

He interrupted McVey's statistics brusquely, addressing Jim with a touch of defiance in eye and tone.

"Sorry to disturb the meeting, but I've got to duck. You don't need me, anyway."

He got eagerly to his feet as he spoke. Jim wouldn't bother him in front of the others.

The depression of the office dropped from his thought as abruptly as the plant itself disappeared from his vision. His mind was happily in the future, intent on the problem of beating Sam Wainwright or Rolin Tregler, or both, in spite of a winter's denial of practice. Eddie Penfold had already ceased to be secretary of the Penfold Manufacturing Company. Without shame or regret he was once more himself.

"Nothing but a playboy!"

Jim had applied the term during their last difference. Somehow it had stung then. And yet, as Eddie found old Christian waiting in the Terminal with his baggage and clubs, his conscience refused to attack him on the score of this relapse.

"Playboy, eh? Well, I guess Jim's right. But what of it?"

He nodded a response to his name, smiling mechanically at the man who recognized him as he hesitated in the aisle of the club-car.

He had no recollection of the face, but that meant nothing. He was on the point of going forward to his half-section when the other gestured toward the vacant chair at his side and spoke again.

"Sit down here, won't you?"

The form and tone of the invitation pleased Eddie dimly. There was a sort of shyness about it, a half-revealed eagerness for his company which, in this man, became almost pathetic. He was little and wispy and old, and his eyes were wistful, like a child's. Eddie classified him easily; a 40-handicap enthusiast, southward bound for a week or two of winter golf. Eddie grinned and dropped into the chair, declining a thin, wicked-looking cigar.

"Going down to Cedarcrest, I suppose?"

"Thought I would." They always began like that.

"That's fine. I'm going there myself." A chuckle, apologetic, self-conscious. "Always make up my mind not to and then make it down again. Lasted longer than usual this year."

"It's a great game," commented Eddie. "Gets to you——"

"Yes. Trouble with me was starting too late. Never learn now."

"Never too late," said Eddie.

"My niece came with me this trip," confided the other. He chuckled again. "Wouldn't let me come alone. Last time I came down for a week I was forty-two days getting back. Says I need a keeper."

Eddie grinned dutifully.

"Better get back to her," his acquaintance said, dropping the remnant of his cigar. "Knows how long it takes to smoke one of these things. Holds a watch on me." He came to his feet, looking more fragile than ever on his reedy legs. "See you later, maybe."

Eddie hoped so, politely, and finished a cigarette in contented premeditations. He deliberately surrendered to a private weakness, playing an imaginary round, shot by shot.

In these imaginary clashes with the natural laws of gravity and momentum, he ruthlessly chose the unhappiest result he could square with his photographic knowledge of the course.

He discovered that these mental practice rounds superinduced a wholesome frame of mind in actual play. He had hardened his soul to the coming calamity, deserved or gratuitous, until the casualties of fact neither annoyed nor disheartened.

Now, as he accurately deposited an imaginary ball in the right-hand corner of the blind trap which lay in wait for the unwary slice, Eddie Penfold, still the child phenom at twenty-four and a half, on his way to Cedarcrest and the mid-March tournament, became a personage of genuine and high importance, in his own estimate as well as in that of the world—the world where rank is mathematically determinable from the handicap lists and a caddy may do more than look at a king.

He was playing his thirty-sixth hole when a splendid personage of color administered the public recognition of his high estate.

"Good evenin', Mistuh Penfold, suh! Fust call foh dinnuh innuh die-nun cah!" Eddie played a masterly approach to the home green from the inkberry bushes which masked the caddy pen, and, with almost a swagger, departed in pursuit of the diner, eight cars forward.

He recognized his comrade of the club car as he followed the conductor's gesture toward one of the small tables at the left of the aisle. The old man faced him beyond the erect shoulders of a girl.

The conductor drew out a chair facing hers. He found himself meeting a direct, deliberate inspection. Only when her eyes moved unhurriedly away from his did he realize that he had stared like a calf.

The old man twisted about to face him, benevolence and a hint of self-importance in his look and tone.

"Penfold, I want you to meet my niece," he announced. "She tells me you've never happened to meet."

The girl came to the rescue, leaning forward and speaking with crisp distinctness.

"I'm Winifred Kendrick, Mr. Penfold. Uncle Arthur keeps forgetting that we're not all famous.

Eddie achieved the result of a simultaneous exit. Following them through three or four sleepers it was completely natural to stop at their sections, easy to accept a gestured invitation to sit opposite her. The uncle suggested a joint expedition to the club car. Eddie declined resolutely and Miss Kendrick seemed reconciled for once to the avuncular cigar. She spoke with a noticeable lessening of reserve.

"I feel almost acquainted with you, Mr. Penfold," she began. "Your name's a household word with us."

Eddie was used to this. They all said it.

"I've met your brother," she went on, surprisingly. "You're a lot alike, aren't you, for such dissimilar men? You've been very successful," she went on with a judicial positivity which puzzled him. "It's one of the big pities about America that it doesn't happen oftener——"

"They've been at it longer—on the other side," he suggested. "Give us time."

She tilted her head seriously. "I've wondered if that might not be the explanation. It's almost tragic," she continued. "We're a race of creators—for one generation only. We do amazing things—splendid things, really—and lose interest in them instantly they're done. We miss the—the traditions which ought to grow up and cling about our accomplishments."

He stared in complete bewilderment. "I don't just get that, I'm afraid."

"You don't?" The light dimmed a little in her face. "I meant that we Americans don't keep a name and a line linked to a business, generation after generation. When Europeans see the telegraph, with nobody named Morse even remotely connected with it, or the whole steamship industry without Fulton's great-grandson at the top of it, when they watch us achieve one industrial miracle after another and never impress a personality on its development, one can't blame them for assuming that the money was all we wanted. Do you see now?"

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"GO on." He was still mystified, except for the single enlightenment as to her topic. She wasn't talking about golf.

"That's what I meant about you and your brother," she pursued. "You've both taken up the work where your father left it. It was really Eben Penfold who made the motor age possible. In a way he was just as much of a pioneer as the men who tamed the forests and plains when the continent was new. And there's something—something fine and splendid about his sons carrying on his work, as you two are doing. There's more real romance in business than anywhere else——"

"BUSINESS AGAIN!" HE SPREAD HIS HANDS.

"Never thought of it like that," he said. Funny what wild ideas girls got, sometimes. Romance and business!

"Oh, but you should," she declared. "You're missing so much of the fun of it if you don't realize the danger and the difficulty, the everlasting demand for courage and wit and strength, the prize that awaits the winner and the loser, too." Her eyes were shining, and he had a queer, dull fancy that a light shone through and through her face.

When he took his leave, he muttered some clumsy allusion to other meetings. She took this frankly, quite without artifice of coquetry.

"I hope so, certainly. I'm always bored at Cedarcrest. Uncle Arthur spends his days out on the links and his evenings in scowling at his score-cards. It'll be a relief to have somebody who's willing to talk about something worth while!"

Eddie Penfold climbed into his berth with this speech for company. He hadn't talked about anything; he'd merely listened. He grinned.

The esoteric welcome which enveloped him at the Hilltop ministered agreeably to a lingering resentment toward Jim and McVey. Here, at least, Eddie Penfold mattered. He harbored a dim hope that Winifred Kendrick observed this reception and appreciated it justly.

He was glad, for the same reason, that the clerk displayed a distinct respect in his handshake, that the porter who seized his bags spoke him worshipfully. He fancied that there was already a change in her regard. She seemed to study him with a deepened attention.

The game engulfed him at once. He put in an hour on the practice tee and observed that he was evidently on the very pinnacle of his game.

Usually he lunched at the clubhouse, but today he went back to the Hilltop. Winifred Kendrick elected to wait until a few minutes before the doors were closed. He saw that she was pleased to find him.

"This is nice! I hate meals here. I'm either alone or condemned to hear why Uncle Arthur didn't break a hundred or how he vanquished some other old gentleman by a masterly approach on the seventeenth."

Eddie grinned sympathetically. She talked about things he disliked, but they did not lessen his response to the charm of her voice, the infectious quality of her enthusiasm. Her references to his father were perplexing. Eben Penfold had been an admirable parent, to Eddie's view, and he thought of him always with an affectionate pang—a sure refuge in times of boyish disasters, but it had never occurred to him to think of his father as a hero of romance. He recalled him now as unimpressive, quiet, thin, submerged, even in his periods of relaxation, in the business.

"It's such a pity he didn't live to see you both carry it on," she said. "He'd have liked that——"

"Jim—my brother—was with him for years before he died, you know."

Her point of view was entirely invisible. He knew that his father had begun as a mechanic. Eben Penfold had risen with ascent of the industry into which he had happened to stumble, a circumstance which made it unnecessary for his son to go through the tiresome business for himself.

It was her suggestion that he join them for dinner. He accepted with so much eagerness that she seemed startled.

That afternoon he played with confident brilliancy. His mental state at dinner was one of supreme content, and afterward, when her uncle drifted off to the lobby, Eddie resumed his role of auditor. His mind followed the talk at a respectful distance; it was enough to sit comfortably in his wicker armchair, to watch the changing play of that curious inner light in the girl's face, to hear the cadence of her voice.

Sunday, at lunch and through a long stroll over the needle-strewn paths between the pines, Eddie Penfold surrendered himself blissfully to the delights of mere propinquity. It was not necessary to devote any thought to the replies for which Winifred Kendrick occasionally paused. A simple agreement sufficed, he discovered. And his mind was free to contemplate a new idea; he had meant to win this tournament anyway, but now he owed it to her, he felt, to justify her friendliness by something spectacular, impressive.

At dinner Uncle Arthu's reminiscent chatter gave place quickly to a silence clearly pensive. Eddie found the old man's eyes studying him with a deliberate, neutral inspection which made him uneasy. Winifred, riding her hobby, took no notice of her uncle's unwonted quietude. But Eddie saw a quick flush rise in her face when the older man excused himself as they reached the lobby.

"I guess you two youngsters can get along without me, can't you? I want to fix up a match for tomorrow——"

He shuffled away, chuckling. Winifred dismissed Eddie abruptly on plea of letters. He connected this with the innuendo of Uncle Arthur's undiplomatic excuse. But, as he thought it over, he warmed toward that gentleman. He felt reassuringly confident of an ally there. He wandered over to the corner where Uncle Arthur had established himself.

"We're all counting on you to win the medal rounds, anyway," said the old man. "Get a good night's sleep." He pinched Eddie's arm. "Go after them, boy. We're all rooting for you." Eddie understood. She'd naturally want him to win. Well, he'd do it.

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"I DON'T see it." Eddie glowered at the toe of his pump. "You seem to think there's something disgraceful about it. I——"

"It's not surprising that you shouldn't understand." Her voice found an unfamiliar edge. "I didn't dream that you were that Penfold—Eddie Penfold, the Infant Prodigy—a—golf player!"

Eddie lifted his head quickly. "It's not my fault that they call me that. I was just a kid when I went into the National the first time, and they can't seem to realize that I've grown up a bit since——"

She spread her hands impatiently. "Oh, that! It doesn't matter. It's the thing itself. Why, you've never done anything but—but this! You've spent seven or eight years on a game—a game for old men! You're exactly the sort of rich man's son I thought you weren't! With a chance to be something, to do something big and splendid, you've deliberately chosen to waste your life on a silly pastime—a stupid amusement for women and children and invalids! Eben Penfold's son—a golf champion!"

"You're wrong about the game," he protested eagerly. "Golf isn't a kid's game, or an old man's medicine, either. It's—it's—oh, if you'd ever tried it you'd understand. There's nothing like it," he ended weakly. "If you'd just try it——"

"Thanks. I will, when I'm sixty, perhaps. Just at present I can find something else to amuse me. I understand that it requires a good deal of practice to play well, and I haven't time——"

"You learn fast," he urged. "I could show you——"

She shook her head, smiling. "No, thanks. I don't care for games, you see. And you don't care for anything else. I can quite understand your feeling. But I'm afraid you can't understand mine."

The condescension in her voice irritated him.

"I can't," he said. "I'm blest if I feel ashamed of myself for going around under seventy-five."

"No." Her smile was dangerously sweet now. "In fact you're proud of it."

"Well, suppose I am? It's the first time I've come home in front of a field like that."

"Exactly. I like that. You're frank, at least. I hope you'll win the rest of it—I believe there's another game or match or something, isn't there? I——"

"Four days' match play, of course. But if I do win, you'll despise me all the more, won't you?"

"Oh, no! You see, Uncle Arthur told me you were Edward Penfold—and I knew that you were one of Eben Penfold's sons—so I took it for granted that—that——"

"That I'd be ears deep in business, eh? I see. Well, I'm secretary of the company. I hold something like 40 per cent of the stock. I'm at the office six days a week except——"

"Except when you're unavoidably absent on the more important business of playing golf!" She shook her head. "I understand all that."

"You mean a fellow hasn't a right to any vacation at all? You think I ought to plug at a desk year in and year out, piling up money I don't need or want——?"

"No. I think you're probably right in your choice. Business bores you and golf doesn't. Mr. MacWhorter showed me his book this afternoon—a record of every prominent player, year after year—kept just like a ledger, you know. You fill two pages in it. And I happened to notice that last summer you played in eight tournaments, each of which lasted a week. Your idea of a vacation is—well, liberal, Mr. Penfold."

Eddie Penfold scowled. "You talk like my brother Jim. He's got the same idea. I can't see it. Business—why, it's about as interesting as euchre! Sit at a desk and answer letters—four times a year cut a dividend—you don't get any action out of it."

"I suppose it must be very tiring—after golf," she agreed sweetly. "I mustn't keep you—it's quite late and Uncle Arthur warned me that you'd need plenty of sleep to win tomorrow. Good night."

Eddie was angry enough to accept the dismissal. Funny how people persisted in talking about business as if there were something holy about it. Business was just a means of making money—profits. If you needed money, you did something to get it. You dug ditches or ran a pawnshop or learned embalming. But when you didn't need the price of these endeavors, why, it was like playing poker without chips—turning an empty ice cream freezer. Between a dull pastime and an absorbing, thrilling one, why should his choice be made an affair of moral delinquency?

People got the cart before the horse, he decided. Business seemed to them an end in itself, instead of merely a means. No doubt some of them enjoyed it, too, as Jim did. If business amused a man more than anything else, Eddie Penfold had no desire to preach the superior merits of golf to him. But it was exasperating to be despised for following his own preference.

He slashed his way savagely through the next day's match, winning at the fourteenth from Sam Wainwright. He lunched at the clubhouse and spent his afternoon lounging on the veranda. He did not see Winifred at dinner, which she elected to consume at another table, and when he found her, afterward, she congratulated him sweetly on his triumph, but declined to renew the argument.

"Let's not discuss it, please. I had no conceivable right to criticise your taste in—in choosing a profession. And I'd rather not talk about it any more."

He could not make progress against this cool determination. He watched her dancing with a boy from Harvard. Eddie himself abhorred dancing viciously. He found a corner in the lobby and surrendered to a dull resentment toward Winifred Kendrick. Why should he care what she thought about golf and golfers, anyway? A girl so stubbornly wrong-headed as she was couldn't matter, one way or the other, to Eddie Penfold.

He avoided her thereafter with some deftness. He breakfasted early; he lunched at the clubhouse; he angled for a dinner invitation at the Lorton cottage. He repeated the performance Friday, except that he went to the Carter's for dinner. Tregler had come through the upper bracket and faced him in the finals. He was glad of this. He knew that he was going to beat Tregler this time.

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THE fact that Tregler's drive lay beautifully in place for a running approach had nothing whatever to do with Eddie Penfold's tee shot. He was not even thinking about it as he inspected the group clustered behind the cord barriers. Vaguely without logic or hope, he was looking for one face among the many. Something throbbed chokingly in his throat as he saw her, met her eyes squarely, felt the half-scornful condescension in her half smile.

She'd come out to see them start, anyway! He felt his nerves draw tight. It was up to him to do something more than beat Tregler—he must vindicate the game.

He felt almost as if the curt nod she sent him over the heads of the nearer bystanders were a spoken challenge. And his answering gesture took up the gage defiantly. He knew that he would play better for the added incentive. He'd play perfect golf—like Tregler—straight down the middle—he watched his ball leap from the turf, saw it come to rest almost where Tregler's lay.

He clung steadily to the resolution. His putt was a few inches short, after Tregler had played his third within a foot of the cup. They halved the second in the same fashion, and the third. Turning, as he moved to the fourth tee, he made sure that she was still following. Her uncle waved an encouraging hand. Eddie grinned back at him, guessing that he owed her presence to the old man's urgency. He'd show her!

Tregler won the fourth, running down a putt from well off the green while Eddie was taking another perfect four. The circumstance did not trouble him. Tregler owed little to luck at any time. The breaks nearly always favored his opponent, and Tregler won by steadiness, playing safe when the other fellow took chances. They were even at the turn, but Tregler took the tenth when Eddie's approach left him ten yards short of the green and was two up at the thirteenth, with another long putt.

Eddie resisted temptation. Four times Tregler had beaten him simply because he had tried to overcome a lead by going after birdies. There were five holes left, and perfect play on four of them would win: Tregler always had a bad hole or two, and a lead seemed to make him overconfident. Eddie shut his teeth firmly and drove twenty yards short of Tregler's shot, squarely in the middle. They halved the hole, and the short, tricky fifteenth. Eddie had forgotten Winifred Kendrick now.

Tregler placed a cautious ball well to the right of the line, avoiding the risky carry over water and trap. Eddie decided instantly to follow his example. The ball arched out toward the safety zone, an audible breath from the gallery filling Eddie's ears. He began a grin, but his lips stiffened. The ball seemed to be deflected, at the top of his trajectory, as if it had found some invisible obstacle. It sliced sharply and disappeared over the shaggy rim of the pit.

Eddie Penfold quite suddenly heard himself laughing. This was golf, he thought, as he took the desolate path to the left of the pond, aware that the spectators followed Tregler around the opposite bank. This was what made it a man's game—a fight, instead of a kind of outdoor solitaire. He whistled softly between his teeth, and scrambled down to the sand.

The ball had struck the near bank and lay as benevolently as the situation allowed, well back from the sinister overhang of the far side of the pit. Eddie studied it briefly. He was a full brassey from the green. It was sheer folly to attempt anything but a sure escape on this shot. But he shook his head, reaching his club up to his caddy.

"I'll play the heavy mashie, Latham." This was fun, anyway—win or lose or draw. He whistled softly as he took his stance, utterly happy. From where he stood he could follow the ball only by the direction and expression of the caddie's eyes, but he knew that he had brought it off.

"Some out, Mistuh Penfol'!" The boy pointed, "Jes shoht o' de secon' trap."

Tregler changed clubs, handing a brassey back to his caddie in exchange for an iron. Eddie smiled faintly. Tregler wouldn't take any chances now. He watched the flight of the ball approvingly. It carried the trap, caught a favoring slope and bounded merrily toward the green. Tregler had been right to change his mind. He saw the white dot pause and stop, three or four yards short of the sand. A sure four for Tregler. The hole and the match unless——. He strode forward to his ball, whistling still, still unreasoningly contented. He felt his club bite cleanly into the thin turf, saw the ball rise, spinning, and curve downward again.

He saw it stop, two feet, perhaps, from the cup. A sure four for Penfold now. The half and a chance for the match—unless——. He chuckled. Golf! That was all—the everlasting unless, the certainty that nothing was certain, the necessity of overcoming one's own weakness, of surpassing an opponent's strength, with Chance, like a faithless ally, favoring first one and then, without warning, the other. Tregler, unperturbed, deliberate, was sighting the line of his putt.

Eddie Penfold detected the all but invisible waver as the club-head came back, saw the ball straggle miserably to the edge of the green and stop. Tregler grinned, shook his head, putted again, missing by inches. Eddie tapped his ball lightly for the win. He was the one down, now, with two to play, against one of the steadiest golfers in the country, but an absolute conviction of victory was upon him as he drove to the short seventeenth, a narrow island of yellow sand beset with hungry traps. The match was already over in his mind. He had won it when he stood in the pit before the sixteenth. He stepped aside and watched. Tregler bettered his drive without emotion. On the green he scarcely paused to line the putt. The ball seemed to chuckle as it dropped for his two. Tregler, deliberate and cautious, missed again and the match was square. The eighteenth was Eddie's from drive to cup.

"I was praying you'd stay out of trouble," said Tregler. "I sort of knew I was licked when you sliced at the sixteenth." He grinned amiably.

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EDDIE suddenly remembered what he had been playing for. He looked for the one face he wanted to see. Winifred Kendrick stood noticeably clear of the group, as if to emphasize her non-participation in its enthusiasm, but he read a new meaning in her glance. It brought him to her quickly.

"Well?" He did not elaborate the question.

"Many congratulations."

"Is that all you've got to say?" he demanded almost roughly. "Didn't you see——"

She was suddenly very grave. "I saw one thing very clearly. I saw that it's even more of a pity than I thought—this golf habit of yours. I saw that if you cared for something worth doing you'd do it as you played just now——"

"But golf—the game—never mind me. Didn't you get any of the—the grip in it? Does it still look as silly as—as croquet?"

"I don't know about the comparison. It seems a dreadful waste, that's all. A man like you——"

"Look here." They were walking, very slowly toward the clubhouse. "You evidently think there's something in me. Well, if there is, golf put it there. School and college and business—why, I hardly knew what they were all about. I wasn't fully alive except when I was out on the course—it's made me whatever I am. And if that's not all useless, give golf the credit for it, anyway."

She stopped short, studying him intently.

"I wonder." He saw her face brighten. "Perhaps you're right about that. It's formed you, we'll admit. It's been your school. Well, isn't your education ever going to be finished?"

"I don't get that." He scowled.

"I meant that if playing golf only fitted you to play more golf, it didn't seem a very effectual training. But if it taught you something else, of course——"

"It teaches you a little bit of everything," he declared. "It—well, just one thing it does is to show up a quitter. It——"

"I saw that." She nodded soberly. "But if you never use the qualities it gives you for anything except a game—if you never do anything worth doing——"

"Business again!" He spread his hands. "A good golfer would be a good business man or a good anything else, five times out of seven. The reason I don't live behind a desk is simply that I don't have to. I don't need the money——"

"Oh, if it were only money——!" She shook her head. "Don't you ever think of the fun of it—the fight—the struggle—the doubt? And doesn't every honest business accomplish something, too—leave the world better?"

"Fun!" He laughed. "No, I never saw any gun in my sort of business—or any fight or doubt, either. It's just sitting still and watching money pile up. As for making the world better, I don't seem to thrill at the idea of doing that with Penfold carburetors, exactly."

They reached the veranda. People crowded around Eddie Penfold, shaking his hand and patting his shoulder. And in the confusion Winifred Kendrick vanished. He learned at dinner time that she and her uncle had gone north on the afternoon train. He found a note in his box, and his pulses drummed as he opened it.

"Perhaps we're both right. We'll see.
"WINIFRED KENDRICK."

He read it over several times. It occurred to him suddenly that he hadn't learned her address. The register was vague. Detroit, however, wasn't big enough to hide her. He'd run out there, he decided, as soon as he could decently desert the office again.

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"NO, I hardly expected you to agree to it, Eddie." Jim Penfold regarded his brother with patient frown. "That would display something like business intelligence. Nevertheless, it's got to be done. They've got us—absolutely. We can't even struggle."

"I don't see it." Eddie was stubborn. "If we don't like their offer we can turn it down, can't we?"

"Yes, Eddie. But it escapes your notice that when we've done that, we've effectively cut our own throats. We can take Hartney's offer now or the receiver's leavings in a year."

"I know I'm a mud-head, Jim, but why? We've got a nice fat surplus, besides what you and I have got outside the business. I don't see why it's a question of having to sell out. Of course, if you want to——"

"Want to? Why, the price is hardly more than two years' profits!" Jim was almost angry. "I'll diagram it for you, Eddie. See if you can understand it this time. We used to sell in the open market, you see. We dealt with about twenty firms—all pretty good-sized ones. You know that?"

"Of course. And I didn't see why we stopped selling 'em either. When Hartney wanted our carburetors, we ought to have enlarged the plant enough to take care of our old customers, too——"

"Yes. That would have been fine." Jim was heavily ironic. "The trouble about that idea was that you were so busy winning a $3 medal out at the Scatterwampum Country Club that you couldn't take time to persuade Hartney to let us. McVey and I had to do the best we could without you. And when Hartney bid for our whole output, on condition that we gave him exclusive use of the Penfold type, we took him up. You see, we weren't as smart then as you are now, Eddie."

"Don't be funny, Jim. What I don't see is why you gave in. We were making plenty under the old arrangement——"

"Selling to Hartney, under his proposal, cut out every penny of our selling cost, that's why. And it took all the gamble out of the business. We were always under fire on the other contracts—fighting competition every minute—cut throat, some of it. Hartney's offer relieved us of all that nuisance. We've shown bigger profits than ever, since we've been selling to him. You know that——"

"Yes." Eddie nodded. "And now, if we turn down Hartney's offer for the plant, good will and patents, he refuses to renew his deal for next year, eh?"

"Of course. He says so, and he means it. He can get along without us, and he knows we're dead without him. Oh, I was easy! I admit that. I ought to have tied him up for ten years, instead of three."

"Never mind the might-have stuff." Eddie frowned. "What's to prevent our going back to the old basis—going out and selling the others, just as we used to?"

"That sounds pretty, doesn't it?" Jim chuckled. "You go out and see how you like selling those fellows—after the way we turned 'em down for Hartney! Why, they'd buy from anybody else on earth before us! Besides, you can't put an advertisement in the evening paper and start your sales department at work in the morning. You've got to build it—hunt up your salesmen, train 'em, try 'em out, gamble on 'em. You've got to back 'em up with advertising—and there's a sweet little job all by itself. You've got to fight for your life against all sorts of competition, of course—you've got to beat graft and meet price-cutters and—no, not for me. I'm spoiled for that sort of thing, Ed. There wouldn't be any fun in it for me, after these easy, comfortable times."

"You're for selling, then?" Eddie sat up straight. "You'd rather hand the whole works over to Hartney at his pirate's figure than put up a fight for it? You'd rather let it go out of the family—the thing dad built with his brain and his nerve and his two hands? No fun in it! Where do you get that idea? No fun in a fight? No fun in——"

"What's got into you, Ed?" Jim stared. "I thought you'd be tickled. That was one of the reasons it rasped me to knuckle under—the beautiful way it'd fit in with your golf. And you seem to think I'm a criminal because I——"

"Look here. Will you stick—see it through? I'll put up every cent I've got outside the business. And I'll work hour for hour with you. We had the trade once and we can get it again———"

"Not a chance, Eddie. If you knew more about the game you'd see it for yourself."

"Will you take Hartney's price for your interest?" Eddie leaned forward. "Take a third of his figure and a third of the surplus—for your stock? I'll buy it—right now. I'm going ahead. Assign your stock and I'll buy it—cash."

He saw his brother's face grow blank, saw the flush come back into it under his hurried speech. He might have known that somewhere, underneath those disguising cushions of fat, was the Jim who had taught him how to hold his midiron—the old Jim, who played the game.

"We'll take a chance, Eddie, if you feel that way." They shook hands. And McVey, presently summoned to a council of red war, found himself addressing the contemptible Eddie instead of the redoubtable and impressive Jim.

The letter which carried their answer back to Hartney would have pleased Capt. Myles Standish, himself an able composer of such messages.

"And we beg to add that in case you decide to continue the use of Penfold carburetors after the expiration of our present contract, we shall not be able to supply them under any arrangement restraining us from selling to other customers."

As Jim dipped his pen to sign the counterblast, Eddie checked him.

"Here," he said bruskly. "Let me sign that. I want to."

* * * *

THE purchasing agent for the Hartney Motors Corporation was a being utterly beyond intimacy, above emotions.

"Just one point, Mr. Penfold." He consulted a typed memorandum. "We are prepared to waive the point of exclusive control of your output, as I have said, but we must have some assurance that you can deliver punctually and in full. I observe that you have already secured several other large accounts, and your business alone about absorbed your capacity production, didn't it?"

"It did," said Eddie. "But since you were so friendly as to let us off on that exclusive proviso, we've looked into that rather carefully. Our present capacity would take care of all the additional business we've accepted and leave no doubt about your deliveries. But to be on the safe side, we've arranged for another building, to be ready before November. We'll give you a bond on deliveries, if you like."

"Our president wants to meet you," presently announced the purchasing agent. "If you'll step this way——"

Eddie, folding a signed contract, was wholly devoid of ill-will toward a surrendered foe as he followed the buyer down a cork-carpeted corridor between ground-glass walls and through a door. And then he found himself staring into the level understanding eyes of Winifred Kendrick.

Eddie was aware of a closing door, of privacy.

"I—you——" The situation was clearly beyond words. He stopped. Every day for six months he had resolved to track her down. For the first time he realized how completely the new game had engulfed him. Six months, without a word——

And what was she doing here? The immediate mystery interrupted his self-accusations. She seemed to regard him with the compassionate, almost proprietary countenance of one who prepares enlightenment.

"Didn't you know? Really?"

He managed to wag his head.

"I hoped you didn't. I thought you hadn't the faintest idea who Uncle Arthur was—down there at Cedarcrest. No matter how little you cared about business, you'd hardly have treated him the way you did if you'd known that he was, next to Mr. Hartney himself, the biggest stockholder here." She laughed a little. "I suppose I need explanation, too. "I'm a sort of understudy—assistant to the president on the pay roll. So I could manage it rather easily, you see." She laughed again, a touch of nervousness in the tone this time. "Or don't you see?"

"I'm perfectly blind," he said. "But, you—you've slipped something over—I can guess that. I don't know what——"

"I was determined to make them cancel that contract from the minute I got home. It wasn't so easy, either. But I wanted to see whether my guess was right. And I couldn't think of any other way."

"I—let me get this straight. You people canceled that contract—with your fingers crossed? You meant to renew—all the time?"

"If you didn't sell, as we suggested, yes. Of course, if you had sold we'd have been pleased. That was really how I was able to persuade Mr. Hartney to try it. You see——"

"But I don't—not a glimmer. Tell me in words of one syllable, won't you? I——"

"You seemed like such a—a waste, down there at Cedarcrest. Just a—a——"

"A playboy? That's what Jim called me."

"Yes. But playing the wrong game, I thought. I didn't understand it till that last day, when you drove into that horrible trap. Then—oh, I could feel that you were glad—that you liked it. The way you came back proved it. And what you'd said about your business—dull, cut-and-dried, a sure thing—I thought that if you faced a fight, trouble, a challenge, you'd find that it was a game, too—bigger and better and ever so much more fascinating than any other. When I saw your name signed to that peppery answer to our letter, I almost laughed."

Eddie's chest flattened steadily as his understanding cleared. He hadn't accomplished anything, after all. The whole thing was just a trick—just a well-intentioned deceit to make a business man out of a golf-player. Then, slowly, he saw that he was wrong. The impetus had come from this girl, but that was all. He owed her for opening his eyes, but the rest was due to nobody but Eddie Penfold himself.

"I—I'm much obliged," he said slowly. "I—I guess I looked pretty awful down there. But you were right—business is the best game I've struck. I like it—why, I haven't touched a golf-club since that day at Cedarcrest. Golf——" He stopped. It wasn't in him to speak ill of the game, even now.

"Golf's a gorgeous game," she finished for him. "You'd better stay over and try our course this afternoon. I—I'd like to have you see how much I learned this summer."

Her eyes wavered for the first time. Something swelled in Eddie Penfold's throat.

"You—you mean you've actually gone in for it—after——?"

"After what I saw you do down there." She nodded. "It struck me then that—that the way to play any game—business or tiddledywinks—was the way you played golf—the—the playboy spirit, I mean. I thought I'd like to play at business the way you played at golf. And I'm beginning not to be so awfully bad at it. If you'd care to play around this afternoon——"

"If!" said Eddie Penfold eloquently. "If!"

Lardner's Hat in Ring for Mayor; Would Learn Bad Grammar

BY RING W. LARDNER.

TO the editor: I suppose most all of my readers knows that they's going to be a mayor election in N. Y. city but it may be news to them that I am being urged to run for same on a dependent ticket and have promised to give my answer whether I will run or not in a few days and the reason I am holding back my decision is to wait and hear from my readers in other cities and see if they would be offended if I was to take office in one city and make it look like I favored one city over others and if they's any of you that feels like this would be unfair, I wish they would write and I will do like they say.

So far they has been 3 other candidates that has announced their intentions of running namely Mayor Hylan who has all ready held the plums for 4 yrs. wile the other 2 is a man named Currand and another man by the name of Judge Haskell or some such name that is running on a wet ticket, and from all I hear his ticket is all wet even before the race starts.

"I CAN LOOK FUNNIER IN A SILK HAT THAN EVEN MOST MAYORS."

Well friends, it is not my intentions to bring up personaltys and mud slinging in regards to my rivals and I will merely content myself in saying that I have got my own idears in regards to how a city like N. Y. should be ran and will come out open and above the boards and state some reforms which I would place in effect and if the people wants me under these conditions well and good, and if not, not so good.

Well friends one of the departments which is most widely disgust and comes in for a gen. pasteing in almost any big city is the police dept. and in regards to the N. Y. police dept. I think the idear of it is all wrong and the whole trouble is too many policemans. I don't know the exact figures but they must be upwards of thousands of policemans. Well in Niles, Michigan, where I was born and raised we had one policeman in the day time and two of them at night and nowheres near as many murders as takes place in N. Y. city and not only that, but the few murders that was committed always comes off in the night time when most of the policemans was on their duty or suppose to be same. The answer is that the more policemans, the more murders.

"WHERE I WAS BORN THEY HAD 1 POLICEMAN DAYTIME AND 2 NIGHTS."

But even suppose that what the chief of police says is true, namely that he has not got enough men to stop the murders. Why my answer to that argument is that if more policemans means less murders, why the fewer police the better, as statistics shows that 90 per cent of the murders committed in N. Y. city in the last 100 yrs. has given gen. satisfaction and was all for the best and the people that was both benefitted and amused by them far outnumbered the people that was put to any temporary inconvenience.

The police problem which I have referred to above of course do not include the traffic squad which it is necessary to have one of them stationed at every corner or else the women folks wouldn't have no way of finding out how many blocks 34 st. is from 35 st. and vice versa. But if I was running the town I would appoint a bunch of traffic policemans that I could trust and confide in them what the traffic laws are, which is now being kept a secret from them for the fear they would squeal.

* * * *

TWO other big problems in a town like N. Y. is the traction problem and the houseing problem. Different mayors has been wrestling with these questions for yrs. and never got nowheres with them but it looks to me like it would be a simple matter to end the difficultys if the 2 problems was combined and make one problem out of them and I would do this by insisting that ½ the stores and offices and factorys would run night times and the other ½ day times and in this way only ½ as many people would half to go to work at the same time and vice versa and not only that, but if the st. cars and subway trains run rush hour schedules every hour of night and day why the motormen and conductors and guards would not need no place to sleep and their houses could be took over by people that did.

In connection with the houseing problem they seems to of been a good deal of speculation by non thinkers on how it come that such a situation come up, namely that is so much crowding now days and don't seem to be nowheres near as many houses as people that wants to live in them. The real answer is prohibition, which before it was passed, the bar rooms took care of hundreds of thousands of people that now haven't no place to park themselfs but home.

About the only other big problem that seems to be worring the people that runs N. Y. is the employment question and a lot of people is always asking what can we do to give employment to the great army of unemployed. In reality this ain't no problem at all and for that reason it would be silly for me to waste my time answering it. It is no doubt true that N. Y. is full of men out of work but it is also true that they ain't another town in the country where they's so many men that wants to be out of work or else they wouldn't of came here and if you was to give them jobs you would make them miserable.

As for my personal qualifications for this high office I don't live in the city proper but can get there as quick as people that lives in Brooklyn where most of the past exalted rulers has lived.

The dutys of the office would not interfere with my regular work as they seem to consist of going out to the opening game at the Polo Grounds and I generally always do that any way, and further and more I could make a whole lot better job of pitching the 1st ball than any of the mayors I have seen try to do it as they was all hog wild.

About the only thing the voters can urge against me is that I can talk pretty good grammar when I really try but I would guarantee to overcome that in the 1st. few wks. and I might say at this pt. that it would not cost the city nothing to buy me a high hat as I have got one somewheres around the house that was boughten 11 yrs. ago but is like new and will say without braging that I can look funnier in it than even most mayors.

RingW.Lardner.

Great Neck, Aug. 26.

Music-Loving Spider.

AN organist, telling of his experiences while playing the great instrument in a Boston hall, relates a pretty story of his most regular listener—a spider that had taken up his abode in the organ case over the performer's head. It remained there for about a year.

It was a musical little fellow, and when the man began to play it would spin down almost to a level with his shoulder and gently swing to and fro and listen. When he had finished a piece it would draw itself up to its nest, and when he began another, down it would come again and resume its position as an interested listener.

It had six legs. Two it put out in the air as a balance pole, two it handled the web with, and the third pair it used in pulling itself up hand over hand, as sailors climb a rope.

The organist came at last to watch for the fellow, and it was always faithful, so that he was sure of at least one attentive and appreciative listener.

Chaleur Bay's "Fire Ship"

ACCORDING to the investigations of Prof. Ganong, the traditional "fire ship" of the Chaleur bay, New Brunswick, appearing usually before a storm, has a basis of fact. It is a hemispherical light, with the flat side toward the water, glowing sometimes without much change of form, but at other times rising into slender, moving columns, in which an excited imagination might recognize the flaming rigging of a ship. The general explanation offered is that this object is a manifestation of St. Elmo's fire, an electrical phenomenon, but the reason for its appearing only on or near Chaleur bay is not known.